

## § 3400.15

made recommendations concerning the scientific merit of such application.

(d) Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, such recommendations are advisory only and are not binding on program officers or on the awarding official.

### § 3400.15 Review criteria.

(a) Subject to the varying conditions and needs of States, Federal funded agricultural research supported under these provisions shall be designed to, among other things, accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

(1) Continue to satisfy human food and fiber needs;

(2) Enhance the long-term viability and competitiveness of the food production and agricultural system of the United States within the global economy;

(3) Expand economic opportunities in rural America and enhance the quality of life for farmers, rural citizens, and society as a whole;

(4) Improve the productivity of the American agricultural system and develop new agricultural crops and new uses for agricultural commodities;

(5) Develop information and systems to enhance the environment and the natural resource base upon which a sustainable agricultural economy depends; or

(6) Enhance human health.

In carrying out its review under § 3400.14, the peer review group will use the following form upon which the evaluation criteria to be used are enumerated, unless pursuant to § 3400.5(a), different evaluation criteria are specified in the annual solicitation of proposals for a particular program.

#### Peer Panel Scoring Form

Proposal Identification No. \_\_\_\_\_

Institution and Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

#### I. Basic Requirement:

Proposal falls within guidelines? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No. If no, explain why proposal does not meet guidelines under comment section of this form.

## 7 CFR Ch. XXXIV (1–1–13 Edition)

### II. Selection Criteria:

	Score 1–10	Weight factor	Score X weight factor	Comments
1. Overall scientific and technical quality of proposal .....	.....	10	.....	.....
2. Scientific and technical quality of the approach .....	.....	10	.....	.....
3. Relevance and importance of proposed research to solution of specific areas of inquiry .....	.....	6	.....	.....
4. Feasibility of attaining objectives; adequacy of professional training and experience, facilities and equipment ....	.....	5	.....	.....

Score \_\_\_\_\_

Summary Comments \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Proposals satisfactorily meeting the guidelines will be evaluated and scored by the peer review panel for each criterion utilizing a scale of 1 through 10. A score of one (1) will be considered low and a score of ten (10) will be considered high for each selection criterion. A weighted factor is used for each criterion.

### Subpart C—Peer and Merit Review Arranged by Grantees

SOURCE: 64 FR 34104, June 24, 1999, unless otherwise noted.

### § 3400.20 Grantee review prior to award.

(a) *Review requirement.* Prior to the award of a standard or continuation grant by NIFA, any proposed project shall have undergone a review arranged by the grantee as specified in this subpart. For research projects, such review must be a scientific peer review conducted in accordance with § 3400.21. For education and extension projects, such review must be a merit review conducted in accordance with § 3400.22.

(b) *Credible and independent.* Review arranged by the grantee must provide for a credible and independent assessment of the proposed project. A credible review is one that provides an appraisal of technical quality and relevance sufficient for an organizational representative to make an informed judgment as to whether the proposal is

appropriate for submission for Federal support. To provide for an independent review, such review may include USDA employees, but should not be conducted solely by USDA employees.

(c) *Notice of completion and retention of records.* A notice of completion of review shall be conveyed in writing to NIFA either as part of the submitted proposal or prior to the issuance of an award, at the option of NIFA. The written notice constitutes certification by the applicant that a review in compliance with these regulations has occurred. Applicants are not required to submit results of the review to NIFA; however, proper documentation of the review process and results should be retained by the applicant.

(d) *Renewal and supplemental grants.* Review by the grantee is not automatically required for renewal or supplemental grants as defined in §3400.6. A subsequent grant award will require a new review if, according to NIFA, either the funded project has changed significantly, other scientific discoveries have affected the project, or the need for the project has changed. Note that a new review is necessary when applying for another standard or continuation grant after expiration of the grant term.

#### **§ 3400.21 Scientific peer review for research activities.**

Scientific peer review is an evaluation of a proposed project for technical quality and relevance to regional or national goals performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed research work. Peer reviewers may be selected from an applicant organization or from outside the organization, but shall not include principals, collaborators or others involved in the preparation of the application under review.

#### **§ 3400.22 Merit review for education and extension activities.**

Merit review is an evaluation of a proposed project or elements of a proposed program whereby the technical quality and relevance to regional or national goals are assessed. The merit review shall be performed by peers and other individuals with expertise appropriate to evaluate the proposed project.

Merit reviewers may not include principals, collaborators or others involved in the preparation of the application under review.

### **Subpart D—Annual Reports**

#### **§ 3400.23 Annual reports.**

(a) *Reporting requirement.* The recipient shall submit an annual report describing the results of the research, extension, or education activity and the merit of the results.

(b) *Report type and content.* Unless otherwise stipulated, grant recipients will have met the reporting requirement under this subpart by complying with the reporting requirements as set forth in the terms and conditions of the grant at the time of award.

[64 FR 34104, June 24, 1999]

## **PART 3401—RANGELAND RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM**

### **Subpart A—General**

- Sec.
- 3401.1 Applicability of regulations of this part.
  - 3401.2 Definitions.
  - 3401.3 Eligibility requirements.
  - 3401.4 Matching funds requirement.
  - 3401.5 Indirect costs and tuition remission costs.
  - 3401.6 How to apply for a grant.
  - 3401.7 Evaluation and disposition of applications.
  - 3401.8 Grant awards.
  - 3401.9 Use of funds; changes.
  - 3401.10 Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply.
  - 3401.11 Other conditions.

### **Subpart B—Scientific Peer Review of Research Applications for Funding**

- 3401.12 Establishment and operation of peer review groups.
- 3401.13 Composition of peer review groups.
- 3401.14 Conflicts of interest.
- 3401.15 Availability of information.
- 3401.16 Proposal review.
- 3401.17 Review criteria.

**AUTHORITY:** Section 1470 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3316).

**SOURCE:** 61 FR 27753, May 31, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

**EDITORIAL NOTE:** Nomenclature changes to part 3401 appear at 76 FR 4806, Jan. 27, 2011.